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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 THE HAGUE 002554

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [MARR](#) [NL](#) [VE](#) [NA](#)

SUBJECT: NETHERLANDS/ANTILLES/VENEZUELA: CONCERNS REMAIN,
BUT NO SUPPORT FOR DRAMATIC SHOWS OF FORCE

Classified By: CHARGE D'AFFAIRES CHAT BLAKEMAN FOR REASONS 1.4(B) AND (D).

[11.](#) (C) SUMMARY: The Dutch MFA provided post with a non-paper on September 19 summarizing the Dutch approach to Venezuela. The paper reiterates that infringements of Dutch sovereignty in the Caribbean will not be tolerated, and stresses that this message will be communicated directly through high-level Dutch-Venezuelan contacts. "High-level" visits from the U.S. to the Netherlands Antilles and Aruba are welcome and the current level of military contacts and counternarcotics cooperation should be maintained. On the other hand, the Dutch see "no reason, at this stage" to expand such contacts dramatically, which could be seen as a provocation by Caracas. According to MFA officials, the non-paper was coordinated with the governments of Aruba and the Netherlands Antilles and therefore reflects the official "Kingdom of the Netherlands" position. Foreign Minister Bot still hopes to visit Caracas in mid-October to deliver a firm message to Chavez -- which would also allow the Dutch to raise the level of discussion within the EU -- but has not yet received a formal invitation. END SUMMARY

[12.](#) (C) On September 19, Charge D'Affaires and POLCOUNS were summoned to a meeting with Marion Kappeyne van de Coppello, Director of the Dutch MFA's Department of Western Hemisphere Affairs, to discuss Venezuela. Kappeyne van de Coppello was accompanied by Venezuela Desk Officer Dimitry Vogelaar and the head of the MFA's North America Desk, Jos Schellaars. During the brief meeting, Kappeyne van de Coppello handed over a ten-point non-paper (text at para 5) which she described as representing the position of the "Kingdom of the Netherlands," meaning that the text had been coordinated with the governments of Aruba and the Netherlands Antilles. (Note: In a separate meeting with POLOFFs, Karel de vey Mestagh, Kingdom Affairs Advisor at the MFA, confirmed that the text had been coordinated with Oranjestad and Willemstad.) Kappeyne van de Coppello asked that the text be treated as a "non-paper" intended to facilitate discussion rather than an aide-memoire or other official document, but noted that it responded to specific US questions raised in The Hague, Washington, and Caracas.

[13.](#) (C) Kappeyne van de Coppello stressed that Venezuelan meddling in the Netherlands Antilles and Aruba remained a serious concern. While Venezuela was a regular topic of discussion at the EU's monthly COLAT meetings, she added, the Dutch hoped that Foreign Minister Bot's proposed mid-October visit to Caracas would provide an opportunity to raise Dutch concerns at the EU ministerial level. Bot would also use the visit to deliver a very tough message to the Venezuelan government "at the highest possible level" that such interference was unacceptable. Kappeyne van de Coppello acknowledged, however, that the dates for Bot's visit were not certain as the Venezuelan government had not yet issued a formal "invitation." She hoped that this would be resolved during a planned pull-aside between Bot and his Venezuelan counterpart on the margins of UNGA this week.

[14.](#) (C) Referring to the non-paper, Charge asked for clarification of the final point that the Kingdom sees "no reason for a show of military strength such as visits of nuclear powered naval vessels, visits of fleets of unusually large scale or frequency, etc." Kappeyne van de Coppello responded that this was a continuation of existing policy and procedures. While large-scale naval visits could provide economic benefits to the islands, she added, all elements of the Kingdom were in agreement on the need to avoid gestures which could appear unnecessarily provocative. She stressed that the "open invitation" for non-nuclear ships remained in force, and that there should be no reductions in the current level or frequency of fleet visits and joint/combined military exercises.

[15.](#) (SBU) Begin text of Dutch non-paper:

[11.](#) The government of the Kingdom of the Netherlands shares a number of US concerns regarding Venezuela, as recently communicated in Washington, the Hague, and Caracas.

[12.](#) The Kingdom is particularly concerned about attempts to influence the Netherlands Antilles' internal affairs. The Kingdom will tolerate no infringements, of any nature, on its sovereignty. The Kingdom will use its contacts with Venezuela to communicate this unequivocally.

13. Concerns about the Human Rights situation and the deterioration of the rule of law in Venezuela are dealt with under the Common Foreign and Security Policy of the EU as well as bilaterally.

14. Given its national interests in the Caribbean the Kingdom of the Netherlands values good relations with its neighbour Venezuela on the basis of respect for each other's sovereignty and territory.

15. As a close ally of the US, the Kingdom is willing to use these channels to convey mutual concerns. A possible visit of the Minister of Foreign Affairs to Venezuela in October might provide such an opportunity.

16. The Kingdom welcomes high level visits from the US to the Netherlands Antilles and Aruba to further enhance established areas of cooperation between the Netherlands Antilles, Aruba, and the US.

17. The Kingdom is also committed to the continuation of existing practices of blanket clearances regarding visits for US non-nuclear powered vessels and aeroplanes to the seaports and airports of the Netherlands Antilles.

18. The Kingdom is also committed to continuing cooperation regarding the Forward Operating Locations on Curacao and Aruba as laid down in the FOL-treaty.

19. Furthermore, the Kingdom is committed to the continuation of combined/joint military exercises in the region.

10. The Kingdom sees, at this stage, no reason for a show of military strength such as visits of nuclear powered vessels, visits of fleets of unusually large scale or frequency or joint/combined military exercises of unconventional scale or scope.

BLAKEMAN